

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Departments of Commerce and Homeland Security today announced \$968 million in Public Safety Interoperable Communications grants for state and local first responders.

California received \$94 million that will be awarded to communities through a competitive process. Applications are due in 30 days and grants are scheduled to be awarded by September 30.

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First responders from different jurisdictions and agencies use various communication technologies that delay communication among emergency personnel during a disaster. Such differences can pose problems and hinder first responders.

Rep. Sam Farr (D-Carmel) offered the following statement:

"I continue to urge DHS and the administration to think of homeland security as more than just an anti-terrorism effort. We must consider this effort in the context of hometown security.

"Keeping our communities safe means we must focus on our first responders and pay more attention to the interoperability of our emergency services. And while our largest cities certainly deserve anti-terror funds, natural disasters are a very real day-to-day threat for our local communities.

"During my years in public service, the Central Coast has experienced seven presidentially declared natural disasters, yet our first responders aren't receiving the resources they require."

For more information, visit the National Telecommunications and Information Administration's Web site at <http://www.ntia.doc.gov> .

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